

Board of Education Seeks Public Comment on Revised Proposed Guidelines for Local School Boards to Award Verified Credits for the Standard Diploma to Transition Students
(Implementation of Senate Bill 609 and House Bill 493)

The Board of Education is seeking public comment on revised proposed guidelines for the awarding of verified credit in mathematics, science, and history by local school boards, under certain circumstances, to certain students, in cases where the student passes a course but fails a related Standards of Learning assessment. The initial proposal was circulated for public comment last month.

The proposed guidelines would only apply to students who entered the ninth grade for the first time during the 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 school years.

Comments may be submitted in writing to Mr. Charles Finley, assistant superintendent for accountability services, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218 or by e-mail to cfinley@pen.k12.va.us no later than July 22.

Final review of the revised proposed guidelines is scheduled for the July 25 meeting of the Board of Education.

Here is the complete text of the revised proposed guidelines:

Proposed Board of Education Guidelines for Local School Boards to Award Verified Credits for the Standard Diploma to Transition Students
(Implementation of Senate Bill 609 and House Bill 493)

The following Board of Education guidelines set forth procedures and criteria for local school boards to award verified credits towards the Standard Diploma to certain students.

Background Information

Under the Standards of Accreditation, students in the Classes of 2004-06 must earn two verified credits in English (reading and writing) and four verified credits in subjects of the student's own selection in order to earn the Standard Diploma.

These guidelines enable local school boards to award verified credits in mathematics, science and history/social sciences that may be used to fulfill the requirement of four verified credits of the student's own selection. These guidelines *do not* apply to the awarding of verified credits in English, which must be earned by passing the high school Standards of Learning tests (or approved substitute tests) in reading and writing.

General Eligibility

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits in mathematics, science, or history/social science under these guidelines, a student must:

- ◆ Enter the ninth grade for the first time in school years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, or 2002-2003 (i.e., be a member of the “transition classes”);
- ◆ Pass the high school course, not pass the related Standards of Learning or approved substitute test, and score within a designated range on the Standards of Learning test that does not represent passing but does represent a certain level of achievement;
- ◆ Meet the additional achievement criteria specified below;
- ◆ Have earned fewer than four of the student-selected verified credits required for the Standard Diploma.

Additional Criteria and Guidelines by Subject Area

Mathematics

The student

- ◆ scores within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test in Algebra I or Geometry;
- AND
- ◆ achieves an acceptable composite scale score on the mathematics portion of the Stanford 9 national standardized test administered in the fall of the 9th grade. The acceptable mathematics composite scale score will be determined by a standards-setting committee.
- ◆ A verified credit may be awarded locally under these guidelines for either Algebra I or Geometry, but not both.

Science and History/Social Science

The student

- ◆ scores within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice;
- AND
- ◆ demonstrates achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

The appeal process will include:

- ◆ The appointment by the local school board of a local review panel comprised of at least three educators. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools, at the local school board’s discretion.
- ◆ The local review panel will review information which provides evidence of the student’s achievement of adequate knowledge of the Standards of Learning content. The panel shall have discretion in determining the information to be considered and may include, but not be limited to, results of classroom assessments, division wide exams, course grades, and additional academic assignments (e.g., papers, projects, essay or written questions) as deemed appropriate.

- ◆ Based on the evidence reviewed, the local review panel may (a) award the verified credit, (b) deny the verified credit, (c) require participation in a remedial program and retesting, or (d) make additional academic assignments as deemed appropriate prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.

General Provisions for Implementing these Guidelines

- ◆ No more than four verified credits may be awarded through this process and these guidelines may not be used to award verified credits for the Advanced Diploma.
- ◆ The award of verified credits under these guidelines will not be used to recalculate a school's accreditation rating.
- ◆ Local school boards shall adopt policies that specify local procedures for implementing these guidelines.